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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

| Senate | . | House |
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| Comm: RCS | . | |
| 02/06/2024 | . | |
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The Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability
(Rouson) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 16.63, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

16.63 Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim
Compensation Program.—

(1) The Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim
Compensation Program is established within the Department of



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11 Legal Affairs. The purpose of the program is to compensate
12 living persons who were confined to the Dozier School for Boys
13 or the Okeechobee School at any time between 1940 and 1975 and
14 who were subjected to mental, physical, or sexual abuse
15 perpetrated by school personnel while they were so confined.

16 (2) The Department of Legal Affairs shall accept, review,
17 and approve or deny applications for the payment of compensation
18 claims under this section. Notice of the availability of such
19 compensation must be given and any relevant forms made available
20 for download on a page of the department's official website
21 accessible through a direct link on the website's homepage,
22 which link and page must be titled "The Dozier School for Boys
23 and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program."

24 (3) An application for compensation under this section must
25 be made by a living person who was confined to the Dozier School
26 for Boys or the Okeechobee School between 1940 and 1975; the
27 personal representative or estate of a decedent may not file an
28 application for or receive compensation under this section. Such
29 application must be made on a form approved by the department
30 and include:

31 (a) The applicant's name, date of birth, mailing address,
32 telephone number, and, if available, electronic mail address.

33 (b) The name of the school in which the applicant was
34 confined and the approximate dates of the applicant's
35 confinement.

36 (c) Reasonable proof submitted as attachments establishing
37 that the applicant was both:

38 1. Confined to the Dozier School for Boys or the Okeechobee
39 School between 1940 and 1975, which proof may include school



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40 records submitted with a notarized certificate of authenticity
41 signed by the records custodian or certified court records.

42 2. A victim of mental, physical, or sexual abuse
43 perpetrated by school personnel during the applicant's
44 confinement, which proof may include a notarized statement
45 signed by the applicant attesting to the abuse the applicant
46 suffered.

47 (d) A signed statement from the applicant acknowledging
48 that, by accepting compensation under this section, the
49 applicant waives any right to further compensation related to
50 the applicant's confinement at the Dozier School for Boys or the
51 Okeechobee School or any abuse suffered during such confinement.

52
53 An application for compensation under this section must be
54 signed by the applicant under oath. A false statement in such
55 application, including in any attachment or exhibit submitted
56 therewith, is subject to the penalty of perjury under s.
57 837.012.

58 (4) Applications for compensation under this section must
59 be submitted no later than December 31, 2024.

60 (5) Upon completed review of an application submitted under
61 this section, the department shall either:

62 (a) Subject to appropriation, approve a one-time payment to
63 an applicant whose application meets the criteria specified in
64 this section. Each approved applicant shall receive an equal
65 share of the funds appropriated for this purpose.

66 (b) Deny the payment of compensation under this section to
67 an applicant whose application does not meet the criteria
68 specified in this section.



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70 Written notice of such approval or denial must be sent by
71 certified mail, return receipt requested, to the mailing address
72 provided by the applicant on the application form. An applicant
73 whose application is rejected for providing insufficient
74 information may submit a new application as provided in
75 subsection (4).

76 (6) A person compensated under this section is ineligible
77 for any further compensation related to the person's confinement
78 at the Dozier School for Boys or the Okeechobee School or any
79 abuse suffered during such confinement.

80 (7) The department shall adopt by rule procedures and forms
81 necessary to administer this section.

82 Section 2. Pursuant to rules adopted by the State Board of
83 Education, the Commissioner of Education may award a standard
84 high school diploma to a person compensated pursuant to s.
85 16.63, Florida Statutes, who has not completed high school
86 graduation requirements.

87 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

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89 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

90 And the title is amended as follows:

91 Delete everything before the enacting clause
92 and insert:

93 A bill to be entitled
94 An act relating to the Dozier School for Boys and
95 Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program;
96 creating s. 16.63, F.S.; establishing the Dozier
97 School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim



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98 Compensation Program within the Department of Legal
99 Affairs; specifying the purpose of the program;
100 requiring the department to accept and process
101 applications for the payment of compensation claims
102 under the program; requiring the department to provide
103 specified notice of the program; specifying
104 application procedures and requirements; requiring the
105 department to issue application approvals or denials
106 under specified conditions; requiring the department,
107 subject to the appropriation of funds for that
108 purpose, to pay a specified compensation amount to
109 approved applicants; requiring notice of application
110 approval or denial; authorizing an applicant whose
111 application is rejected to submit a new application;
112 providing that a person compensated under the program
113 is ineligible for further compensation related to his
114 confinement; requiring the department to adopt by rule
115 specified procedures and forms; authorizing the
116 Commissioner of Education to award a standard high
117 school diploma to specified persons under certain
118 circumstances; providing an effective date.